

VETERANS BENEFITS AWARENESS TASK FORCE
MISSOURI VETERANS COMMISSION
Tuesday, September 30, 2003 — 3:00 PM
VFW Post 1003, 217 E. Capitol Avenue
Jefferson City, MO

In attendance:

Ronald Taylor, Executive Director; **Ralph Durnbaugh**, Director of Planning; **Sharon Keith**, Director, Service to Veterans Program; **Carl H. Niewoehner**, Chairman, Missouri Veterans Commission; **John Eckhoff**, Veterans Service Manager St. Louis County Dept. of Human Services; **Kathy Sturgeon**, St. Louis County Dept. of Human Services; **Hal Dulle**, Assistant Director, Missouri Veterans Commission; **James Whitfield**, MO Military Funeral Honors Program; **Col John L. Cairer**, MO National Guard; **Bill Groninger**, Branson Veterans Task Force; **Kyle Clower**, Lt. Governor's Office; **Leonard Harris**, DAV; **Raphael Wahwassuck**, DAV; **Larry Daniels**, DAV; **Dave Dambrosio**, DAV

Updates- Ralph Durnbaugh updated on the achievements of the first year of the Veterans Benefits Awareness Program:

Toll free number has received 4677 phone calls between August, 2002 and September, 2003.

Thirteen Benefit Supermarkets held between July, 2002 and September, 2003 registered over 3,025 Veterans (see attachments).

Overall Missouri saw an increase of 2,590 Veterans receiving compensation. From August, 2002 to August, 2003 there was an increase of \$3,266,000 in monthly Veterans benefits in Missouri.

A discussion was held regarding plans for 2004. It was agreed unanimously that the first supermarket be planned for April 8, 2004 in Jefferson City, Missouri. Hal Dulle will check on the availability of a location near the Capitol.

Over the next three months attempts to identify additional resources for other supermarkets will proceed.

The Committee agreed that further attention needs to be focused upon metropolitan areas (where it appears many veterans are not receiving the benefits they have earned).

An additional area of concern is outreach to Guardsmen and Reservists leaving active duty.

The next meeting of the Veterans Benefits Awareness Task Force will be coordinated with the January Veterans Appreciation Day at the Capitol.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.